



Message of the Week

July 24-30, 2002

Presented by Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN)

“Republicans are fighting Democrat efforts to put special interests above the safety of Americans.”

- As the legislation to create the Department of Homeland Security moves through Congress, Democrats will offer numerous amendments that would undermine the effectiveness of the new Department and place the interests of special interest groups ahead of the safety of American citizens. Below are a sample of the most significant potential threats to President Bush’s goal of creating a Department of Homeland Security that can efficiently protect America.
- **Amendment to Put Trial Lawyer Interests Ahead of Homeland Security**– The bill reported by the House Select Committee on Homeland Security places limits on the liability of private companies when the products they have produced are used by the government to fight terrorism. This provision encourages companies to innovate and to provide the government with the latest technology necessary to fight the war on terrorism without fear of having to pay millions of dollars to lawyers to defend them from baseless lawsuits.
- Democrats reportedly want to strike this provision and add a new provision that requires the government to indemnify corporations against such lawsuits. In other words, companies would get no protection and American taxpayers would be forced to pay for any judgments against a company. This would provide an incentive for trial lawyers to sue every single company that provides the government with anti-terrorism technology.
- **Amendments to Put Union Interests Ahead of Homeland Security Interests** – The bill reported by the House Select Committee on Homeland Security provides the new Secretary of the Department with some flexibility to ensure that employees are deployed where they are most needed and that incompetent employees are reprimanded or removed from duty. Ensuring our nation’s security requires that the Secretary have the ability to promote the best and brightest employees and terminate those who fail to do their job.
- Democrats reportedly may offer an amendment to remove even this limited flexibility. This proposal would place the interests of rigid pre-negotiated union policies ahead of the flexibility necessary to ensure the safety of American citizens.
- In addition, Democrats reportedly may offer an amendment to require that all construction projects carried out by the new Department of Homeland Security be subject to the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirement. This requirement would artificially increase the cost of construction projects by requiring that the government pay wages above what would be paid in an open-market. These increased costs, estimated to be as much as 15%, will mean that the Department will have less money with which to undertake other critical projects.

For more examples of Democrat efforts to put special interests ahead of truly protecting America, visit this website:

<http://www.house.gov/burton/RSC/HSecurityAmdts.PDF>